

(5)

A

COMMENTARY  
ON THE  
DYSENTERY:  
OR,  
BLOODY FLUX.

---

Translated from the LATIN of  
**MARK AKENSIDÉ,**  
Fellow of the COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, Member  
of the ROYAL SOCIETY, and Physician  
to her present MAJESTY.

---

By JOHN RYAN, M.D.

---

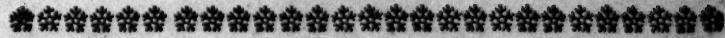
---

L O N D O N:

Printed for F. NOBLE, near Middle-Row, Holborn;  
and J. NOBLE, in St. Martin's Court, near  
Leicester Square. MDCCLXVII.

[ Price Two-Shillings sewed. ]

149



## C O N T E N T S.

### C H A P T E R I.

|   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| <i>An historical account of the dysentery</i> | Page | ■ |
|---|------|---|

### C H A P T E R II.

|                                     |   |    |
|-------------------------------------|---|----|
| <i>Of the cure of the dysentery</i> | — | 38 |
|-------------------------------------|---|----|

### C H A P T E R III.

|                                       |   |    |
|---------------------------------------|---|----|
| <i>Of the causes of the dysentery</i> | — | 69 |
|---------------------------------------|---|----|

### C H A P T E R IV.

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <i>Of the action of the ipecacoanha in people<br/>troubled with a dysentery</i> | — | 91 |
|---|---|----|

## E R R A T A.

### Page Line

|     |    |                                   |
|-----|----|-----------------------------------|
| 21  | 11 | for throw, read thrown            |
| 24  | 17 | for its, read it                  |
| 24. | 22 | for they fuck, read is fucked     |
| 33  | 20 | for teteismus, read tenesmus      |
| 37  | 17 | for he, read the                  |
| 60  | 16 | for nourishment, read nourishment |
| 62  | 22 | for tosted, read toasted          |



A

COMMENTARY  
UPON THE  
DYSENTERY.

CHAPTER I.

*An historical account of the dysentery.*

**A** PERSON afflicted with the more acute gripings in the belly, with a frequent inclination to stool, and who emits the evacuations with bloody, or mucous matter, is, by the unanimous opinion of physicians, agreed to be troubled with a dysentery: nor can any other disease be called by this name,

B

2      *Of the dysentery.*

name, unless these three symptoms be found therein. The other signs arising to the patient, are not precisely examined by this rule, but are described differently by different authors; but as I had frequent occasion in the course of several years constant practise, to observe several things, which either did not occur to others, or have appeared to them in a different light from what they did to me, the right understanding of which, would in my opinion, evidently turn to the good of the community, I determined with myself, to lay before the public, what I found by experience to be almost of an infallible efficacy. In doing which, I shall in the first place, state those things which may be conducive, either to explain, or illustrate the history of the disease, but yet so as to transcribe  
or

*Of the dysentery.*      3

or repeat the observations of others, as little as possible; next I shall lay down, what I found to be almost infallibly attended with success in the cure of that distemper; and in the last place shall subjoin, what I take more immediately to respect the theory of the disease, and quality of the medicines used therein.

IN doing which things, however my opinion may differ from others, I do not mean thereby to weaken their credit, nor reflect upon their diligence; for the complexion of the same disease, may at various times, appear differently, so that no physician, however skilled in these things, can twice expect the same symptoms; for according to \* Sydenham, “ It may happen that

\* *Observat. de morb. acut. sect. 4. cap. iii.*

there may be as different sorts of a dysentery, as of the small-pox, and other epidemic disorders, and which, on that account, require a different kind of cure in some, from what is to be used in others;" for if this was not the case, we could not take the liberty of making any excuse in any species of it; for in every kind of philosophy, there ought to be a freedom to chuse, but particularly in physical questions, where the mind must extend itself, to the right understanding, both the occasion of what it is to know, and the matter to be learned thereby. But if it should happen, that such as differed from great men in their sentiments, would be thought to violate the esteem and reverence for them, it must infallibly happen, that students thus circumstanced, would make little

pro-

progres, nay scarce would have a beginning or increase, but rather continue in a state of infancy; a complaint which may be with great justice taken up, concerning medicine, above any other art or employment whatsoever.

My first observation then concerning a dysentery is, that the same ought seldom or never to be considered as consisting in acute diseases, or to be attended with any fever, a doctrine different from what the chief modern physicians have laid down; indeed the antient writers rather establish the opinion which we have adopted, and strengthen the same upon their own practice and authority: On the other hand Sydenham\* represents, that this disease does

\* *Loco citato.*

not

6      *Of the dysentery.*

not always take its rise from horror and from rigor, though this be the general case: that these are followed by a heat through the whole body, as is customary in fevers; nay, in describing particularly the state of the air, and of some general distempers, he very properly says that a dysentery \* is none other than a real fever, predominant during that constitution of the air, but with this peculiar difference, that its malignant tendency was inward, and that discharging itself into the intestines, it, by these opened for itself a passage by which it might be evacuated.

† Doctor *Mead* is at pains to shew that it proceeds from an inflammation, and never without some degree of a fever: a prejudice so strongly rooted in *Boerhaave*, that

\* *Ibid. sect. I. cap. ii.*

† *Monita et præcept. med. cap. vii. sect. I.*

in

*Of the dysentery.* 7

in his whole book of aphorisms he has not mentioned a dysentery, further than in explaining the notion of a *diarrhoea febrilis*, or when he enumerates some ulcers which sometimes terminate the inflammation of the bowels; but indeed to speak truly, accurate descriptions of diseases, could not be expected from *Boerhaave*, notwithstanding he was a man of the greatest candour and ingenuity; as through the whole of his life, his aim was to teach his students the elements of medicine, as a science already brought to perfection, and founded upon geometrical principles, and capable of a mathematical demonstration: but whoever applies himself to a search of this kind, he will gradually become fuller and more intent upon assigning the reasons of things: in

8      *Of the dysentery.*

in fine, he will make it his study so to enlarge upon the causes, that these in a manner may take in, and explain the most of the phænomena which may occur. It is on this account that a master at the same time when he spares his own trouble, procures greater weight and authority with his followers, than if he should first resolve to trace the matters to their first source ; and to denote the variety of them he should, in the mean time, professing his own ignorance, leave the causes and the principles on which they depend to be sought out and investigated by others. But 'tis likely, that in this affair *Boerhaave* was guided by the example of *Aretæus*; for although most part, if not all the physicians of antiquity, in a peculiar manner, represent ulcers among the

*Of the dysentery.* 9

the causes of a dysentery, yet some account for them upon other principles, and give a different representation of the nature of the disease: However, *Aretæus* is single in his opinion, for while he specifies the different symptoms of it, he refers their variety, without assigning any reason for his opinion, to the various ulcers in the bowels; it may readily be granted, that an ulcer was sometimes the effect of a dysentery, but I cannot be brought to grant that it was the cause, unless at the time when the patient was afflicted with some other ailment of the intestines from whence a brooding ulcer might, in the last extremity, have an uncouth likeness to a dysentery: But a dysentery of this kind, in tracing out the progress of the pre-

C sent

10      *Of the dysentery.*

sent disease, ought to obtain here no manner of place whatsoever.

NOR does it seem more agreeable to truth, to attribute the beginning of the disease to an inflammation; for an inflammation of the bowels always produces a great and burning fever, it binds the body, and in a manner seals up the stomach; from this binding we judge of the greatness of the danger, and when once this is removed, we look upon the worst to be over, and the patient to be in a fair way. From all which it appears, that an inflammation is contrary to the very nature and genius of a dysentery, a great part of which consists in the too frequent use of the stool: seldom, indeed, are the more evident marks of a fever to be observed in persons troubled with a dysen-

dysentery, not even if by chance there be a quicker pulse arising from a pain in the bowels, or if on account of a looseness, there be a considerable degree of thirst, or if the tongue be covered over with a languid white, all which must be attributed to a fever. These ailments generally cease so soon as the inflammation of the intestines has been subdued: nor is their connexion with the dysentery more close than with several other diseases which daily occur; but indeed I have not observed one patient in ten, who was visited with a fever, antecedent to the dysentery, or whom the former left at the time when the latter had abated. Every thing is the reverse; the face for the most part is emaciated, and looks inordinately pale, the eyes lively and clear, the pulse weaker,

C 2                      nor

nor at any time higher, except when the pains of the stomach are more exquisite and more constant; no chilliness, no heat, and what may remove all doubt, the disease, when left to itself, is for the most part tedious and lingering, so that from some patients I understood that they had been troubled with that distemper for two or three months together. Besides the thorough cure is not as in fevers, the work of a few hours, depending upon a sudden turn of the humours, but is slowly and by degrees brought to perfection, by the repeated use of the same remedies: This I say is the real nature of the disease, as I have observed in the course of five or six years, during a very large and considerable practice upon those troubled with a dysentery in *St. Thomas's hospital,*

an

an account of whose case and condition I have marked down. It indeed may happen, and sometimes does, that, in men who are naturally of a warmer constitution, or who contract a fever from other causes, a dysentery is attended with a fever; but in an encampment, or from some peculiar condition of the air and diet, the face of the disease will become different; and yet in that inveterate dysentery which made such havock at \* Nemeguen, in the year 1736, and in the camp, which that accomplished physician doctor † John Pringle has described, the symptoms of a fever were so few and so obscure,

\* Vide *Degnerum de dysent.* pag. 16, 22.

† *Observat. on diseases of the army*, ch. v.  
*sec. I.*

that

14      *Of the dysentery.*

that no manner of regard was to be paid to them, so that the matter becomes briefly this, that the dysentery, like the rheumatism or other articular disease, sometimes contains a kind of fever within itself, or at least is attended therewith; however, that this distemper is frequently more lingering, and unattended with any real fever, and much more so than even the rheumatism itself.

ANOTHER observation pretty similar to this, and which I had frequent occasion to make, has obliged me to differ from some illustrious authors, which is, that a dysentery is not confined to any peculiar season, but may happen at anytimes of the year. Upon the authority of Sydenham, the common opinion of physicians is, that

that its beginning is generally about autumn, that it decays towards the winter season, but seldom continues for any time during that period. Indeed from the testimony of Galen, one would be convinced that the matter was quite otherwise, for he says that the dysentery is more infecting \* and troublesome in the summer; but the change of the air in England; the state of our atmosphere in autumn; the transition from heat to cold, and from dry to moist, renders the human body more obnoxious to diseases of this sort; besides the too hasty use of autumn fruits before they are thoroughly ripe, may not a little contribute thereto, notwithstanding we see many people, who have abstained from every

\* In libr. Hippocr. *de natura humana comment. prim.*

kind

kind of luxury, seized with dysenteries at that time. However, I cannot give into \*Sydenham's opinion, that dysenteries abate as the winter advances; for in the years 1760, 1761, and 1762, these continued throughout the winter, no less frequent nor less troublesome than in the beginning of autumn; nor did they abate in the least of their wonted inveteracy, until the spring considerably advanced, and had diminished from the sharpness of the air, and rigour of the winds; a circumstance, which, in my opinion, will not a little tend to trace out the disease to its first source, and to shew its close connexion with the rheumatism; which last, except at a time when it is joined with a more painful fever, is rather an

\* *De morb. acut. sect. iv. cap. i, ii, et vi.*

attendant

attendant during the winter than the summer season. Besides, in the autumn of the year 1762, such as were troubled with the dysentery, and of whom there was a considerable number, were much more frequently visited with feverish symptoms, than such as laboured under it in the following winter; and yet these symptoms of the disease did not appear more favourable in the winter period: something like this frequently happens in the rheumatism, if I am not mistaken; that is, though in the summer-season it is not so frequent as it is in winter, yet it is oftner accompanied with a fever during the former period: However, these observations ought not to be taken too strictly; for at the very time of writing them down, viz. about

D                    the

18      *Of the dysentery.*

the latter end of December 1763, two or more dysenteries, fell under my immediate inspection, which drew a remarkable fever along with them : It is sufficient, if what we have advanced, be in general true ; although it may not always be found to be confirmed by practice, and experience.

IT is frequently observable, that such as are afflicted with a dysentery, are, both oftener and for a longer time than is agreed among authors, greatly afflicted with a squeamishness, and propensity to vomiting. Some make mention of this accident, but as of a lesser inconvenience, which only shews a kind of pain at the beginning of the distemper. I indeed have observed patients, afflicted with the dysentery, vomit three

three or four times in twenty-four hours, for several days together; and the most part of them to continue under the same symptom, until the remaining violence of the disease was got under. Nay, I cured one man, who before consulting with me, did every third or fourth day, for six weeks together, vomit of himself; and another, who for three months, frequently emitted such like evacuations.

But what Sydenham \* seemed rather to hint than to affirm, has generally happened in the course of my observations; that the first attack of the disease did immediately seize upon the small guts, and then in an orderly progress, reached the rectum; and when

\* *De morb. acut. sect. 4. cap. iii.*

the gripings had almost ceased, on some people the tenesmus seemed to be more urgent and importunate; that sharp and putrid matter, at first abounding in the gut jejunum and ileum, now flowing only from the small vessels of the rectum. From this constitution of the disease it happens, that when a patient may seem to himself and his physician to be out of danger, yet his stools may be tinged with bloody streaks, or some small appearances of bloody matter; and yet, in the first and most dangerous stage of the disease, no blood is evacuated: for, since from the long continuance of the distemper, the coats of the intestine rectum, and the vessels inherent in them, are so emaciated and thinned, that they are wounded with the least strain at stool.

stool. But after the impulse and force of the disease has subsided into the colon and rectum, it frequently happens, that some feculency left from the digestion of different aliments, continue inactive in the smaller intestines, until, toward the end of the disease, every part of the abdomen, having recovered its natural strength, these morbid particles are throw off; and since their acrimony becomes greater, in proportion to their continuance, it happens that by their descent, there arises a considerable pain, and for a day or two, blood is evacuated with them. In the mean time the hemorrhoidal veins are so distended and weakened by the tenesmus, that after a dysentery of a long continuance, they generally grow into blind tumours, which sometimes

**22**      *Of the dysentery.*

times are attended with an extremity of pain. And yet for these reasons, the falling down of the rectum, particularly in a lax and delicate habit of body, often terminates the disease, as Degnerus hath remarked in the dysentery, which raged at Nemeguen some years ago.

THESE being wholly removed by the power of medicine, a plentiful and daily purging succeeds a dysentery, but yet free from any pain, for while that sharp and mucous matter of the dysentery, by which the gripings and the tenesmus were occasioned, is discharged from the intestines and mesentery, the canals of the vessels are widened at the same time that their elastic force is dimi-

\* *Hist. Dysent. pag. 17.*

nished ;

nished ; so that after all the mucus has been consumed, the vessels may proceed to emit the serous humour in large quantities, which in itself is indeed innocent, but yet from its abundance, may occasion an immoderate looseness, and impair the strength of the patient.

NOR indeed so frequently, tho' more than once I have seen a dysentery abate somewhat in women, *cum supervenissent menstrua.* For while they were pained with bloody stools, occasioned from a very troublesome tenesmus, and an exquisite pain in the intestines, all these have been quieted, upon the breaking out of the Catamenia, and so soon as that purgation was over, things became crude and returned as before.

Along-continued dysentery, especially in persons of a loose and pitui-  
tious habit of body, frequently ends  
in a dropsy, which generally is of  
the worst kind, and but little alle-  
viated by the most effectual reme-  
dies : But this chiefly happens,  
when by *opiatis medicamentis*, me-  
dicines inclining to sleep, the dy-  
sentery has been prematurely sup-  
pressed and thereafter has been  
renewed. Thus have the bow-  
els, from whence the chyle is sup-  
plied for nourishing the body,  
become weaker, and performed  
their functions more slowly ;  
hence it comes to pass that the  
temperature of the humours be-  
comes weak and insipid, the red-  
ish part of the blood dissolving,  
and the aqueous rendered more  
foul and viscous. And thus they  
suck in gradually, the mucus of  
the

dysentery, so long latent in the intestines, by the mouths of the lacteal, lymphatic and mesenteric vessels, and thus the lymph becomes thicker, through every part of the body, which, while it is exhaled into the different cavities, and into the smaller cells of the adipous membrane, becomes flower and more glutinous, than to be again received, with ease at the extremities of the lymphatic vessels, or to be percolated by the minutest glands thereof; for whenever there is a stagnation of the lymph, either in the lymphatic vessels, or in the glands, the person so affected falls into a dropsy.

But what I take to be the chief article of these things, which falls within the compass of my knowledge for enlarging upon the

E                  history

history of this disease, is its strictest affinity with the rheumatism. I indeed chuse to use the Greek appellations, in the treating of it, lest, by affecting Latin vocables, I should be reduced to the necessity of perpetual circumlocutions, a thing no way agreeable to myself, and tedious to my readers. Then I give the name rheumatism, an expression more derived from use, than from a Greek original, or any other peculiarity, to those pains with which the joints, the muscular, or membranous parts of the body are affected, whether there be a fever or not. It very frequently happens, that however soon people are freed from a dysentery, they are seized with a pain in the shoulder, or in the side: sometimes the pain seizes upon the breast,

breast, the arms, the legs, or the integuments of the cranium. This pain is preceeded by no convulsive shuddering, nor is it attended with any signs of a fever, for the disease is plainly reduced to the class of a chronical rheumatism; of whose shiftings I have more examples, than I would chuse to represent here. Sometimes I have had occasion to cure a man, both of the rheumatism and dysentery, at one and the same time; nay, I have sometimes known the gripings of the intestines to be attended with exquisite pains through the whole body, particularly the more fleshy parts, while too violent a contraction would cramp the thighs and legs; so as that the whole skin was infected with livid spots throughout; this happened in a particular

E 2 manner,

manner, in the autumn of the year 1762, when both the dysentery and rheumatism were epidemical, but as the season advanced, toward the end of October, these diseases seldom united in the same person, nor was the rheumatism wont to seize the muscles, or membranes of the patient, before the pains in the intestines were removed, which was the more frequent course of the two distempers. But sometimes, when a diarrhæa succeeded a dysentery, the rheumatic pain, either excruciated the side, the shoulders, or the legs and arms of the patient : whence it is clear, that purging is a natural instrument, or channel, by which that acrid and morbid kind of matter is conveyed from the body ; and that this matter may pass

pabs from one part to another, while the looseness continues, which now excites no anguish in the intestines, but is altogether useless toward eradicating the nursery of the disease. But in this mutation of the disease, it may happen, that the same, by seizing upon the nobler parts may produce more dismal effects, than when it was confined to the intestines : of which I saw an unhappy instance in a middle-aged woman, but of a tender and delicate constitution. I had lately given her ease, from a very vehement dysentery, which was greatly exasperated by excruciating gripings and frequent vomitings, but in a short time after, she found a very troublesome pain in the lower part of the left side, near the kidney ; for the

30      *Of the dysentery.*

the disease, from griping, became arthritic, and had passed from the intestines, into the diaphragm, or midriff, where that muscle is connected to the lowest ribs, and now may justly be reckoned a species of paraphrenitidis: there in consequence of a continued respiration, the pain became more acute, and the danger much greater; nor indeed were there any signs of a great fever. In this state she was twice blooded in the arm, when as great a quantity was taken as the strength of the body, neither naturally strong, and mightily weakened, by a former distemper, would admit. Then nitre was given in plenty, with an addition of the oil of sweet almonds and salt of harts-horn; of the former there was a plentiful dose, but

but of the latter, only a small quantity. A blistering plaster, was likewise applied to the part affected, which for three, or four days together, extracted a large quantity of a glutinous serum. However, the pain was nothing abated, then the plasters were applied to the calves of the legs, and at the same time, the steam of warm water was applied to the place affected. Which remedy was often repeated, and continued for a considerable time before it was removed; whence the woman received only small intervals of ease; and so the whole were to no purpose. And as the ailment increased daily, she died upon the twelfth day, after the pain had seized upon her side.

Nor,

Nor, by the mere transition of these diseases, is their affinity manifest; for oftentimes, from the contrary cause, a dysentery arises from a rheumatism; for I frequently have known, in a sharp and continued rheumatism, when it was judged proper to give physic, that the stools occasioned by the guaiacina, neutral salts, or mercurius sublimatus dulcis, were like those of the dysentery. They were attended with gripings, and the acutest pain; consisting almost entirely of putrid mucous matter, so exquisite, that toward the end of the purge, a tenesmus arose, with an excruciating torture of the intestine rectum, and its sphincter. So that, for several days together, there remained a very troublesome

some perception of tenderness in that part. And what is still more, I cured a young woman of twenty-five years of age, who was troubled with the rheumatism through her whole body, to such a degree, that she lived without the use of her limbs, almost motionless and inactive, not being able to move any part of her body for pain ; but after that, by bleeding, blistering, and the use of guaiacum, and nitre mixed with salt of harts-horn, the strength of the disease was so broke, that the woman could freely discharge the functions of her calling ; and in a day's time was seized with a dysentery, with very putrid stools, a vehement tetesmus, and perpetual gripings. These at last ceased, through the application of remedies ; but the rheumatism return-

F      ed

34. *Of the dysentery.*

ed upon the joints, not indeed with the same force as before, but troublesome enough, and inveterate. I likewise observed the same alternation of these two diseases in a certain old woman, though with a more deplorable issue; for when the dysentery returned, after being left by the rheumatism, and that this last was failed also; the rheumatism seized her with such severity a second time, that her exhausted and emaciated body became unequal to bear her up, under the pressure of the ailment; and, yet in the same person I observed three such changes; so that she three times had the rheumatism, and the dysentery as often, before she was restored to her wonted health.

This

This connexion, which the intestines have with the muscles and membranes of the joints, appears also in the colic of \* Poictou and that of Devonshire, † in that where the American caribbee islands are infested, and in that severe distemper, wherewith all will, sooner or later be visited, who are employed in the working of lead or quicksilver, such as painters, (for these are workmen not artists) plumbers, and gilders. In affections of this kind, the transition of the matter of the disease, is not from the intestines into the members of the body, and again from these into the in-

\* *Vide Francisc. Citegum, de novo et populari apud Pictones dolore colico, cap. vi.*

† *Vide Huxham, de dolore colico Dansnon.*

36      *Of the dysentery.*

testines, but at one and the same time they labour under both distempers. And in each of them the body is bound. Then the pains of the joints are greater and more rooted, when the force of the disease is possessed of the ligaments and tendons. And besides it is more inclinable to produce the palsey, or the falling-sickness. And to sum up all in a word, the disease is the more dismal; and, when it becomes inveterate, it is by far the more stubborn.

Most of those who died of a dysentery, found gripings to cease a little before death. In some, the apthæ broke out toward the end of the disease; in others the looseness was stopped. And almost all were in a short time after

after seized with a stupor and somnolency, or else cold sweats arose, so in a few hours they expired. Whether the vital strength was exhausted, from the over discharging of the intestines, or what appears more probable, and which appears to have happened in some cases, the very intestines were mortified, being touched with the deadly gangrene. However, the termination of the disease was for the most part more fortunate, since of the different patients afflicted with the dysentery, who were under my care, scarcely he twentieth person died. Therefore I now proceed to the method of cure, which I have generally used.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the Cure of the Dysentery.*

**I**N administering remedies to these patients, the first thing to be considered, is, whether bleeding be convenient. If there be an immoderate heat, a shivering, or a too quick pulse, there can be no doubt, but a vein should be opened immediately; and altho' the signs of a fever be totally absent, yet if the sick person be of a full and plethoric habit of body, it will in that case be proper to let blood; for in this manner the danger of an impending fever is avoided; and the rheu-

rheumatism, so frequently subsequent to the dysentery, is in a great measure prevented. But however these things may happen, when stools are streaked with blood, the opening a vein will be of great utility to remove it : besides this kind of medicine is to be approved on another account, as when the fibres of the muscles and membranes, as also the coats of the arteries are too tight, and from the least irritation are apt to be contracted. A dysentery, without doubt, will occasion convulsions in the bowels, as also gripings unusually dangerous and severe. In this case bleeding is extremely proper, as it is the readiest and quickest remedy of all those called antispasmodics. In fine, the griping itself, when most powerful and inveterate, will

will be considerably abated by losing a small quantity of blood. On which account, since so many reasons directed the physicians to open a vein, we may conclude, that bleeding ought to be the first step, until some manifest symptoms dissuade therefrom ; these symptoms are a weak habit of body, inclining to a dropsy, the danger of which frequently follows a dysentery ; a thorough weakness, occasioned by an inveterate disease ; horror, or a cold sweat ; an irregular pulse ; stools more than ordinarily fetid ; and whatever may prognosticate a mortification or a gangrene in the intestines. Wherever any of these symptoms appear, bleeding is to be carefully avoided ; otherwise the cure is to be begun therewith : as to the quantity of

of blood to be taken, that is to be judged of according to the age and strength of the patient : I seldom or never think that above ten ounces are to be taken from the most robust or vigorous constitution; or that bleeding is to be repeated.

After letting blood, we must next examine the state of the stomach. If the patient frequently feels either a strong inclination to vomit, or a loathing or indigestion after meals ; if his tongue be discoloured or covered with mucus ; if there be an acid or bilious taste in the mouth, or if the wind be more troublesome near the lower orifice of the stomach ; in that case my way has been to give a vomit of *ippecacoanha*, in order to ease the stomach of every

G noxious

noxious impediment ; and though I do not think this medicine to be so efficacious as bleeding, yet I do not recollect that ever any patient was the worse by the use of it : on the contrary when it was neglected, I observed that the other parts of the cure advanced more slowly and with more difficulty : wherefore, notwithstanding the signs of a foul stomach may not be so plain, yet it will not be improper to prescribe one scruple of *ippecacoanba* after letting blood, unless the patient be so weakened, as not to be able to endure the fatigue of vomiting any longer.

In an hour or two after the vomiting is over, I proceed to give that medicine, which from long experience I found to be almost infallible ; that is, one grain of the

the *ipecacoanba*, which being mixed with half an ounce of the common simple mint water, and two drachms of the spirituous, or two ounces of the simple alexiterial water, with half a drachm of the cordial confection, ought to be taken every sixth hour. For on this account I was induced in the year 1758, to make use of *ipecacoanba* in dysenteries. I had already observed, that some physicians of great practice were wont to give five grains at two different times in the twenty-four hours, or once towards the evening, for three or four days. And as I observed this medicine to give immediate ease from gripings, but for the most part to return soon after, I resolved to try an experiment whether or not the dose repeated, in a less quantity, could

give a more continued ease from the pain. First then, I prescribed that four grains should be taken every day, and sometimes that the same quantity should be taken every six hours. Thus I found the medicine of the utmost efficacy towards rooting out all the maladies of the distemper, provided the patient could be prevailed on to continue taking the same. But indeed that was not to be done, because of a squeamishness, and frequent vomiting ; and therefore I understood, that the medicine, if repeated, was to be given in lesser quantities every time than another ; and when I observed the disease generally to be lingering, and therefore to admit of a tedious cure, I thought it best to prescribe the *ippecacoanha* in so small a quantity as to create  
the

the smallest disgust, or at least such as might easily be endured, provided that in this manner, patients could continue to make use of it, and at the same time be sensible of its efficacy in curing the dysentery, which if it was not immediate and full at once, yet was by daily practice found to be certain and infallible. I was led to be of this opinion upon the authority of William Piso \*, who informs us that the inhabitants in the Brazils were wont, at three different times, to boil two drachms of *ippecacuanha* in curing the malignant diarrhœa or dysentery ; nor does he reckon the third decoction to be less efficacious than the se-

\* *De indie utriusque re naturali atque medica*, lib. 2. cap. 9.

46      *Of the dysentery.*

cond, or first : nay, he says, that the efficacy of the third was the greatest ; but indeed it is not likely that any strength for vomiting should remain at the third decoction ; and yet by experience, that was not useless, towards mastering the disease. Whence I concluded that the virtue of the medicine did not depend upon its power to excite a vomit.

Led by these reasons, I, in the year 1759, while the dysentery was epidemic, but particularly about the beginning of Autumn, prescribed two grains of *ippecacoanha*, to be given at the end of every six hours as formerly mentioned. And as at that time, and thereafter, the disease became general in St. Thomas's Hospital, so I could oftener make those

those experiments, which demonstrated the extreme utility of this method ; but a little after I only mixed one grain of the *ippecaco-anha* in every draught, as I frequently observed a too continued squeamishness to arise from two grains, which inconvenience appeared soon, not to arise from one grain, or at least to be of no long continuance. From this time I used this quantity, except in cases where the gripings were too severe, and that the evacuations of blood by stool were too copious and frequent : so that a physician ought rather to endeavour an immediate than an easy cure of his patient. When the matter stands thus, I do not so much regard the squeamishness of the stomach until I am satisfied that in some measure

sure the intenseness of the disease, by the use of the two grains, be got under ; and so at last I became contented with a prescription of one grain. In this manner while now for four years, I proceeded to administer the *ipeca-coanha* daily to people afflicted with the dysentery, I found, by experience, that the use thereof, in all kinds of the disease, was both innocent and salutary : nor is it material whether the dysentery be acute or chronical ; whether the stools are streaked with blood, or if they consist of mucus only. For in every degree of age, sex, and constitution ; and in all seasons, the medicine equally produces its salutary virtue. I do not chuse to affirm that I never was mistaken or disappointed ; though indeed less by the use

use of this medicine than any other; the virtue of the peruvian bark against intermitting fevers only excepted.

Several eminent\* physicians have observed that the *ipecacoanha* generally created a sweat, and to this they have attributed its efficacy. Sometimes the sweat begins upon the first taking that medicine; yet seldom except when there is an inclination to vomit, which can scarcely arise from one grain. Though if our conjecture has been just with regard to the nature of the disease, perhaps no medicine of equal efficacy can be administered in a dysentery, than that which causes the patient to sweat plentifully; which the *ipecacoanha*, joined with opium, does more

\* *Vide Jo. Friend, de febrib. commentarium quartum.*

50      *Of the dysentery.*

than any other. Yet this cure is not to be practiced in case of a tenesmus, or a frequent necessity of going to stool, which are so concomitant to a dysentery, and which often bring a man, when dropping with sweat into the utmost danger of his life ; therefore we must trace out a method, by which the *ipecacoanha* may, without sweat act its part and remove the dysentery.

When given in this way, it is neither wont to create any tendency to vomit, nor to raise a sweating. But generally its virtue may be observed in the space of twenty-four hours, by the condition of the intestines being altered. The first symptom of an alteration for the better, is, when the stools are free from blood and putrid matter ; after this the gripings are neither so acute.

acute nor so frequent, nor is the tenesmus so troublesome. Almost in the space of two days, and frequently sooner, the patient is sensible that the disease is in its decline: he can go about his daily business as he pleases: however he still feels griping pains, and continues to feel them for five, seven, or perhaps ten days together; but such as may be easily endured, and are daily decreasing. Indeed the stools do not lessen in the same proportion, nay, they sometimes appear more plentiful during some days; and yet they give less uneasiness and pain, and in a short time they decrease in their number and quantity.

But since in the beginning of the cure, the patient must dispense with enduring grip-

H 2                        ings

ings, strictly and properly so called ; yet after one or two days regimen in the manner laid down, that kind of pain seems to have ceased, nor will the bowels be pained except at stool, and from the sharpness of the matter evacuated ; by which matter the intestines exceedingly tender, appear to be wounded, rather than to be strained and twisted into gripings or convulsions : and this pain may be perceived for some days, but so long as it continues, let the medicine be repeated two or three times a day. It sits easy on the stomach ; and without any trouble to the patient, it may be repeated as often. Which will appear more evidently from the following accounts.

A cer-

A certain unmarried woman, about forty years of age, was so exasperated, on account of some disputes, which she had with her own family, and with some of her relations, that she determined to be her own executioner; for this purpose she swallowed a whole drachm of the corrosive sublimate of Mercury. She was instantly seized with the ordinary symptoms, namely, a heat and excruciating pain in the stomach and the intestines: The apothecary who soon came to her aid, poured down warm water, and linseed oil plentifully into her throat, that he might carry off part of the poison by vomiting, or at least to dilute and blunt its spicula. A few hours after I was sent for to the sick person. I prescribed a draught to be taken every six hours, of the follow-

following mixture, namely, one ounce of oil of sweet almonds, and another ounce of simple alexiterial water, with three drachms of manna mixed ; and who at the end of every three hours, was to have constantly a clyster, made of five ounces of oil of sweet almonds : then at proper intervals I ordered that a lixivium of tartar should be plentifully poured into some mutton broth, and the patient to drink frequently thereof. In hopes that this alcaline salt intermixing with the corrosive mercury in the intestines, might attract its acid salts, and so render the mercury almost crude and innocent, which succeeded accordingly ; for after she had continued under this regimen for twelve days, she was freed from all danger and pain; but in a day or two after she was seized with a violent

dy-

dysentery, accompanied with vomiting, mucous stools, and the most exquisite gripings: on which account, I ordered her to lose eight ounces of blood; and that once in six hours she should take two grains of *ippecacoanha*, mixed in a julep of common simple mint water; and that at proper intervals, she should take another draught, made up of one ounce of the oil of sweet almonds and one drachm of the syrup of poppies: By the use of these remedies, she in the space of six and thirty hours was perfectly cured of the dysentery; but in a short time after she complained of blind piles, whose size was extremely troublesome, and attended with violent pain; but they soon subsided by the application of the white ointment, having a twelfth part of the Theban extract mixed with it:

56      *Of the dysentery.*

it : and thus at length, the woman escaped from the impending danger of a shocking death, and was restored to perfect health.

The other history is of a woman of a more delicate constitution, and in the 35th year of her age. I was called to her in less than a month after a dangerous lying-in, when at the same time she was troubled with a dysentery, a fluor albus, and a procidence of the anus; her strength was much exhausted, both by reason of her late lying-in, and the complication of distempers under which she laboured: and as the dysentery was the most pressing ailment, so I took care in the first place to ease her stomach with a gentle vomit : I then gave her one grain of *ipecacoanba*, in the usual julep, at the end of every six hours,  
and

and at intervals gave her a small draught of the oil of sweet almonds, with one drachm of the syrup of poppies to ease the gripings. When the disease by these medicines had been got under, and in a day or two became less troublesome; in order to stop the fluor albus, I twice a day, for some time, gave her half a drachm of olibanum, but without discontinuing the *ipecacoanha*: At length, in consideration of the weakness of the rectum, I prescribed a fomentation of the decoction of Galls. The pains decreased daily, and she acquired strength; but before she was quite rid of the dysentery, she used the *ipecacoanha* for twenty six days successively. The dysentery was followed by a diarrhoea, which was at length removed by using the electuary of scordium: She continued taking the other medicines for two weeks longer,

I at

at the end of which she was restored to perfect health, and became equally strong as before.

From these two instances; whether in the first case the condition of the intestines, after taking the poison, be considered when the dysentery attacked the woman; or if, in the latter case, regard only be had to the continuance of the distemper, in a slender body emaciated with so many ailments; it is sufficiently clear, if I am not mistaken, how safe and efficacious such a cure may be: To which we may add, that in a *lues venerea*, and in the very time of laying on the mercurial ointment, persons are frequently seized with a dysentery, as well of the bloody as of the mucous kind: of which so soon as any signs appear, I have been

been wont to apply this method of cure, after leaving, for a time, the use of the stronger mercurial ointment: nor did I ever observe that this disease, if taken in its beginning, long resisted the power of these remedies, or in any manner obstructed the primary cure thereof.

But while the *ipecacoanha* is, according to custom, given to the patient, he may twice or thrice a day, at intervals, take a draught of oil mixed with one drachm of the syrup of white poppies; for by this means we find that the acrimony of the stools is abated, and the gripings become easy and cease: however, there will be no need of this, except for one or two days in the beginning of the cure, and when the disease becomes more violent.

While

While things are thus ordered, much severity should not be used in regulating the diet of the sick person; for as all kind of fever is generally absent, and when the strength needs not a little to be recruited, on account of the many evacuations that are made; besides broths, jellies, and other preparations from eggs and milk, sometimes it will be proper to eat a bit of chicken, veal, mutton, or some such light food. But we must be extremely careful to forbid the patient all kind of nourishment that may irritate, or inflame the bowels, or that is windy and affecting.

I have already observed that a diarrhoea was wont to follow a dysentery; to prevent which, and to rightly adapt the cure, a physician ought to use his utmost diligence and sagacity; for, by opiates, and

and astringent medicines, to stop a looseness too hastily, while the fomentors of the disease are not yet eradicated; is not only very dangerous, but even imprudent: hence it is that physicians of the greatest eminence begin the cure of the dysentery with purgatives. And indeed this method has this peculiar advantage, as is already shewn, that it tends to expel the matter which foments the disease, at the same time that it alleviates the pain and removes the gripings. The *ipecacoanha* given in this manner has, doubtless, a tendency rather to promote a looseness, than to bind the body; which will still be rendered more effectual by using the oleous and anodyne mixture, but so that all kind of danger will not be over; for, when the dysentery, with the gripings, the tenesmus, and

62      *Of the dysentery.*

and the sharp stools are removed, the diarrhœa may still continue, and at last exhaust, nay overpower the patient. Wherefore, whenever the nature of the disease, or the constitution of the patient, gave me any suspicion of this kind, I was wont, instead of that oily draught, to substitute another, containing two scruples of the electuary of scordium dissolved in simple cinnamon water. And lastly, when the pain, with the other symptoms of the dysentery were removed, if still the diarrhœa continued troublesome, the whole of the cure is to be adapted and converted thereto. A fit matter for which will be supplied from the white decoction, prepared with double or triple the quantity of gum arabic; or rhubarb toasted and compounded with cinnamon, or the decoction of the simaroubæ bark;

bark ; or the extract, or decoction of log-wood ; or the electuary of scordium; or cow's milk, in which are boiled cinnamon and the barks of oak and pomgranate ; or lastly, cow's milk, the most efficacious remedy that occurred in the course of my experience ; in one pint of which, while it is hot, let one ounce of mutton fowet be dissolved.

When the patient is considerably advanced in years, or is broke with the continuance of the distemper, but particularly if the pulse is weak, or the tongue be covered with fetid slime, the face and palms of the hands be wont to grow warm suddenly, or if sweats begin to break out more frequently and in more abundance; in such cases the peruvian bark will give the greatest relief, provided a looseness

64     *Of the dysenterij.*

looseness can be prevented: and this will be best remedied, by compounding half a drachm of that bark with five grains of toasted rhubarb in the form of a bolus, or by mixing three drachms of the tincture of cinnamon with three ounces of the decoction of bark: Either of these medicines may be used twice or thrice a day with a very good success.

But though the dysentery may be mastered by these remedies, yet frequently, as I formerly observed, men are seized with the rheumatism like gouty pains, either between the shoulders, or in the sides, or in the integuments of the head, or in the arms, or in the legs. Great care must be used when we are to encounter with this new adversary; for the medicines which are most effectual against

against the rheumatism, when they have something sharp and proper for cleansing all obstructions; yet occasion some danger of irritating the intestines, and so preventing the dysentery from being removed: Wherefore neither the guaiacum, nor the sweet sublimate mercury, nor nitre, nor volatile salts are rashly to be given; but the matter is rather to be effected by such remedies, which are of an antispasmodic quality, as already observed; and which at the same time encrease the perspiration; such are Castor, Musk, and the root of wild Valerian.

However, since these pains are generally free from a fever, it would be most expedient to raise plentiful sweats, which, when the patient does not refuse the remedy, nothing will more effectually

K                    create

create them, than the powder made of *ippecacoanha* and the Theban extract, of each two grains, with nitre and vitriolized tartar of each eight grains. This being once taken, the patient laid in bed, and covered over with quilts and blankets, will occasion sweating in great plenty ; but if less, in six or seven hours the dose is to be repeated : in the mean time he must drink copiously of barley water, or rather of the decoction of guaiacum and liquorish. And this for 10 or 12 hours, very plentiful sweats will be emitted ; by which neither the strength of the patient will be impaired, and yet in a great measure that glutinous and sharp serum in which the disease is lodged, will be carried off.

But when the patient refuses this method of cure on account of its being tedious and troublesome,

some, or ought not to be admitted, on account of the weak state of the patient's body, recourse must be had to blistering plaisters; and these must be applied to the part afflicted; and whenever the pain shifts to another part, the plaster is to be applied thereto: the patient in the mean time is to be supported with the gentlest kind of nourishment. Such medicines as were formerly named are to be given, in order to keep up the spirits, but yet neither to raise an immoderate heat, or irritate the intestines.

May I be permitted to subjoin an instance in a man almost forty years old, who, after he had laboured with a dysentery for fifteen days, asked my advice. He had frequent vomitings, putrid stools, and the most exquisite gripings:

gripings : by all which he was so weak as to be scarce able to stand : nay, even while sitting, he could scarce keep his head upright : first, by taking one scruple of the *ipecacoanha*, I unloaded the stomach ; and afterwards prescribed one grain of the same root to be taken in his usual drink, every six hours. In a short time the man was cured of the dysentery : but he was constantly seized with the most exquisite pains, and which were wont to shift their seat every third or fourth day. I applied blisters to the parts affected, and ordered him, three or four times a-day, to take a cordial draught, which contained one half dram of wild valerian ; and in place of this, when after six or seven days nothing seemed to be apprehended of the dysentery returning, I gave three ounces

ounces of the decoction of Peruvian bark, with thirty drops of the volatile tincture of guaiacum: So that after a month's treatment in this manner, the patient was restored to perfect health; for in that time he had eight blisters; namely, between the shoulders, upon the arms, the calves of the legs, behind the ears, and on the hinder part of the head, according as the pain shifted.



C H A P T E R III.

*Of the causes of the dysentery.*

**I**T may, doubtless, appear surprising to some, and, perhaps, absurd to others, that if, after I have laid down whatever had a tendency to set off the history, and

and explain the cure of a dysentery, I should at last proceed to speak upon the causes thereof, and explain the virtue of the medicines which relieve the intestines from it. The reason is plain to the generality of medical writers, who treat the matter each in his own way: for, desirous that their peculiar discipline should be regulated like a science, they become contented with any kind of experiments and observations which fall within their own cognizance, either casually or otherwise, and from thence draw a general and universal conclusion, and use the theory built thereon, as the real theory of the distemper, proved and established on such a foundation: but this method of reasoning, called the analytic method in the schools of the philosophers, is too hastily adopted by physicians, and

and built upon too slender a basis: but then the same gentlemen approving more the synthetic method, form a conclusion some way or other drawn from the analytic way, as a principle already granted; and according to this, they judge of the various symptoms of the disease, they direct the intent of the cure, they fix upon medicines; and, in fine, explain the force and efficacy thereof. Such as follow this method judge themselves to be the only physicians worthy the dignified title of philosophers; they give out that their medicine is the only true, substantial, and rational one to be met with. Whence to me, who follow a quite different course, 'tis very evident that I shall appear to some to be an enemy to philosophy, and to act the empiric: however, a little attention will soon

soon remove every anxiety of this kind. Medicine is by no means to be numbered among these faculties, which might stand contented with a superficial enquiry; it ought to be minutely and fully enquired into: indeed some branches of knowledge may be investigated both analytically and synthetically; I mean such as have objects of a simple structure and a determined order; as mechanics, chemistry, and astronomy. The matter, which is the immediate subject of these, is evident to our senses, and consists but of a few principles, neither is it liable to variety and unlikeness, but is always and every where the same; wherefore a small diligence is only requisite for tracing out their causes and principles; and when once these are investigated, their application is manifest, and the profit

profit arising from them is full and exuberant: But, indeed, it is quite otherwise with medicine: The spring and source of diseases are, for the most part, involved in darkness; their causes exceeding complex, their appearance and form ever changing, and, lastly, their progress and declension, of which we can but shrewdly conjecture, seldom render us secure even with respect to ourselves. Since this is the case, it would be the greatest imprudence not to use every kind of assistance in a matter of such doubt and such difficulty. Preposterous, indeed, to the utmost, to pass an opinion upon the nature of the disease, before its cure be understood, and these things be thoroughly considered, which may either subdue or promote the distemper.

L As

As to what regards the choice of medicines, I am afraid that is a topic never to be digested upon the principles of philosophy; I mean, that from the nature of the disease being first understood, and from a sense that some function in the animal œconomy is injured, a certain remedy can be found out, which, by its proper and peculiar efficacy, can be sufficient for restoring that function to its former state, and perfect an effectual cure: in this very disease the use of *ipecacoanha* may demonstrate how the matter is entirely otherwise; for when it had spread among the ignorant and illiterate inhabitants of Brasil, and that in the manner handed down to them by their forefathers, William Piso, a Dutch Physician, had an opportunity of observing the medicine which those people generally used:

used: and from America he conveyed it into Europe: something like to which may, if I mistake not, be said of other remedies, whose efficacy is singular; and indeed it ought not to be covered and dissembled either through the false modesty, or ambition of physicians. Neither are these, nor yet the art they profess, to be reflected upon, if medicine is not founded on principles which, perhaps geometry, logic, or even moral Philosophy may boast of; namely, that it has not been deduced from reason alone, and built thereupon: It will be sufficient for them, if, by the assistance of their reason, they have diligently studied the medicines which either nature or chance first pointed out to them, and whose sanction was only owing to a vulgar prepossession in their favour, or to some such for-

tuitous cause, and have accommodated these to the functions of the human body, according to the strength and age of the patient; and, lastly, to the times of the disease. Then it will be lawful to make an enquiry into the nature of the diseases and the strength of the remedies; such questions are attended not only with a certain satisfaction, especially when they discover the causes, and account for the effects which we see produced from them, but likewise with great advantage, as they can recover the use of medicine from transitory and fluctuating experiments to a certain fixed state of science: Besides, from these there are frequent conclusions, which direct toward discovering the nature of the diseases, and for finding out their remedies. Wherefore we must now treat of the  
nature

nature of the dysentery, and of the operation of the *ipêcacoanha* therein.

There are in this disease two things which merit our particular attention; namely, the gripes, and the more glutinous and sharp slime which these stools discover: We must therefore enquire which of these are most visible in the patient, and which of them is the cause and occasion of the other: for this question concerning the spring and origin of pain in the solid parts, whether the same is rather to be imputed to the badness of the humours, as that belonged formerly to all manner of diseases, is, in cases of the dysentery, not a little canvassed among the moderns; for there were some who looked upon convulsions in the bowels as

the

78      *Of the dysentery.*

the very source of that disease, and judge the slime, of which these stools consist, to be abraded from the coats of the intestines by the force of the gripes: whereas, before this, it contained nothing hurtful, or contrary to the ordinary course of nature, although, in continued spasms, it at length degenerated and became morbid.

However, this doctrine is entirely repugnant to the account given of the dysentery by former authors; for the acrimony of that slimy matter does, without doubt, irritate the intestines, and occasion gripes: this appears evidently from the season of the year in which the dysentery is most frequent; for after the solstitial heats of summer, the more moist and cold air in autumn renews this disease, and renders it more common;

common. This change of the air, as it, in the first place, acts upon the skin, and upon the vessels thereof, accounts rationally for the change of the humours in the body, and for the corruption thereof, namely, a decrease of perspiration through the skin, and a greater plenty and thickness of the serum and lympha through the whole body, but not so as that the intestines be raised into spasms while there is no previous fault in the humours: for we know that at the same time, and for the same reasons, the rheumatism becomes exceeding frequent: which disease is most certainly contained in some thick and sharp humour, but knew no spasms in the intestines. These will necessarily arise in people troubled with the dysentery, whenever they are of such a kind as to flow

80      *Of the dysentery.*

flow with uncommon plenty and sharpness into the cavity of the intestines ; on which account gripings are so constant with the distemper, yet are not the primary cause thereof : but these are owing to some sharp and glutinous slimy humour poured into the intestines : which is, therefore, to be considered as the matter whence the disease arises, and in which the same is contained.

The coats of the intestines vellicated with this morbid mucus, are frequently drawn into convulsions and gripings : which last do compress the mouths of the exhaling arteries and excretory passages of the glands, by which evacuations are made ; and thus are constantly provoking a more plentiful effusion of that peccant

peccant humour: so that what first was the effect, does in its turn become the cause; for the slimy matter, of which the stools in a dysentery consist, is very different from that natural and innocent mucus with which the concave sides of the intestines are lined over: as this seems to be quite washed off by the force of the gripings at the beginning of the distemper; and, in place thereof, a certain morbid kind of matter flowing from the glands and arteries of the intestines as from a fountain, furnishes new matter for other stools. This origin of the dysentery, so far as I can find, was first described in a very perspicuous and candid manner by Alexander Trallianus,\* who in the same, rightly acknow-

\* Lib. VIII. cap. 8.

ledges, that the exulceration of the intestines is not the cause of the dysentery, but rather the effect thereof.

The mixture of blood in stools that come from those troubled with a dysentery, is owing partly to the acrimony and sharpness of the humours, though principally to the force of the gripings: it is seldom in such plenty as to appear issuing from some of the larger vessels, when these are either wounded or broken; but rather from the minute branches of the arteries, that run over the coats of the intestines; nay from the coats themselves, which being too much absterged by the acrimony of the current humours, and so rendered more tender, they are, by an acceding force of convulsions, easily hurt, and bleed;

for

for the flux of blood which is poured from thence, so soon as the gripings are over, ceases to be discharged : as appears sufficiently in the curation of the disease. For by taking, once or twice, one grain of the Ipecacoanha, the gripping pain generally abates, and the sanguine evacuations stop : this cannot in the least be attributed to any virtue whereby so small a portion of that root, may constringe and conglutinate, arteries that are divided, or veins that have been wounded ; but rather to the violence of the gripings being removed by the medicine ; so that after this, the blood is no longer propelled from the membranes and small vessels : a circumstance confirmed by the observation already made, namely, that a bloody dysentery, with which women are afflicted, to

M 2                  have

have ceased for a time, upon the eruption of the menses; for that menstrual flux of blood is too sparing and slow, to be accounted either as a derivation, or revulsion: but, while this continues, a woman feels a certain ease and relaxation through her whole body, whence after the gripings of the dysentery are laid, the blood ceases to be expressed out of the coats of the intestines.

But with respect to the drops or streaks of blood which sometimes tinge the stools at the end of the disease; these indeed, as has been already observed, are drawn from the hardened recrementa of the belly; which after they have for sometime remained in the smaller intestines, are yet at last expelled, by the recruited force of  
the

the bowels and muscles; and thus they throw the blood from the rectum, and the sphincter thereof.

There can be no great doubt or difficulty concerning the mucus, of which the stools, in time of a dysentery, are composed: many and different signs sufficiently show that this humour is plainly of the same kind, as that to which the rheumatism ows its rise; whether from a disposition of nature, the badness of diet, or from the sudden migration from heat to cold in time of harvest, the thin and serous humours in the body become more sharp and glutinous; but after they have been so depraved, if they do fill up any cellular membrane in any of the limbs, they vellicate the muscular fibres, the nerves, the tendons, and the ligaments

guments of the joints ; they cause pain ; and render that limb less fit to be moved : they bring on a chonical rheumatism, or, indeed one of an acute kind, as the causes occasioning a fever increase and come on ; but if the same be directed towards the viscera of the abdomen, and be thrown into the cavity of the intestines thro' the absorbing vessels, and the excretory ducts of the glands, they bring on gripings, frequent stools and other symptoms of a dysentery ; which affinity of both these diseases with the properties common to each other, sufficiently appears from all that we know concerning them,

First it appears from what we have said concerning the easy gradation of the dysentery into a rheumatism, which is wont to happen

happen, as it necessarily must, upon the dysenteric stools ceasing, before the morbid mucus of which these stools consisted, had been entirely purged off by the intestines; or when the whole habit of body is so overcharged with that mucus, so soon as its derivation, which was made by the intestines, is suppressed, another part of the body may be overloaded with that humour; and thus become painful and diseased. The same conclusion follows, and becomes still stronger, from the examples already brought of a rheumatism changed into a dysentery; frequent observations confirm this, and by experience it appears that both the dysentery and rhumatism became general, even at the same time of the year, and on account of the same state of the air. Besides both diseases

rage

58      *Of the dysentery.*

rage in a very terrible manner among the same kind of people ; namely, among seamen, after they come off long voyages.

But still the same method of cure is applicable to both ; for though the morbid matter is naturally thrown out by stools, occasioned from a dysentery ; yet I have seen once and again, on the relapse of a dysentery, a blistering plaster applied between the shoulders, had allaid both the gripings, and suppressed the mucous evacuations from the intestines ; when in the mean time it drew a serum from the part affected, as manifestly showed the nature of the dysenteric mucus ; and was so thick, glutinous, and acrid, that after removing the blister, it fell by drops, irritated, inflamed, corroded, and, at length, eat

eat into the skin, in the very same manner, as the dysenteric mucus is often time wont to affect the coats of the intestines ; which happens in a rheumatism that is more than ordinarily violent, when the blistering plaster is applied to the part aggrieved : this does not so frequently occur in a dysentery, because then the acrimony of the viscid mucus, is diluted and tempered by a copious afflux of the aqueous humours ; so that scarcely such an effect is observed in the intestines, unless the disease be in its worse degree. But whenever the dysentery has become too inveterate, and that the patients are brought into the utmost danger, by reason of the frequent stools they are forced to ; sometimes in the beginning of the cure, I ordered a blistering plaster to be applied between the shoulders, at the same time when I gave

N the

the *ipecacoanha*, in the manner already specified ; which was always attended with success. Whatever then is founded on this principle, tends much to ease the intestines : so that in curing the dysentery, a medicine should be prepared, as if the disorder contained the rheumatism within it. Infine, I have so frequently observed this similiarity in the diseases, that some time ago, I looked upon the dysentery, as a rheumatism in the intestines ; not indeed in the same sense, as Cælius Aurelianus gives this appellation to the dysentery. For with him the rheumatism signifies nothing more than a defluction of humours. But we, by transferring that appellation from the pains of the joints and muscles, and applying it to the intestines, do contend that the matter and cause of either distemper are intirely the same.

C H A P T E R IV.

*Of the action of the ipecacoanha in people troubled with a dysentery.*

**I**N explaining the cure of the disease, the *ipecacoanha* ought to be particularly considered: its efficacy seems to depend upon two powers or faculties; first, because it renders the belly more soluble, and so expells the humour that gave rise to the disease, and by which it is nourished, from the body; in the second place, because it relaxes the coats of the intestines, and breaks the violence of the gripings: whence the pain, in a great measure is abated; and the disease becomes so tolerable, that for the most part, the patient without any great trouble, may wait till the morbid matter has been wholly evacuated by stool. The *ipecacoanha* performs this part of an anodyne medicine, and that with the greatest safety to the

the patient, without any inconvenience following it: since if the matter had been tried by opiates, it must happen that from the frequent and continued use of them, a variety of diseases, dangerous both to life and health, would ensue. That we do believe any antispasmodic virtue of this kind to agree with the *ipecacoanba*, it will perhaps appear a new doctrine, and to some highly improbable, and yet by no means have we embraced this opinion without proper authority; for after once or twice taking the *ipecacoanba*, the griping pain almost always becomes easier, though the matter of the stools may have abated but little or nothing of their wonted acrimony and sharpness, which the intestines still feel, being somewhat pained, but not constringed and forced into spasms as before. This can  
in

no otherways be explained than that the medicine doth so relax, and ease the coats of the intestines; that the irritation of the descending mucus cannot contract them into gripings. To the same purpose is owing the retarding and suppressing the effusion of blood, by the *ippecacoanha*; for an astringent power is no way inherent in its nature, which could so suddenly compress and shut up the wounded orifices of the blood vessels. But when its antispasmodic virtue hath already stopped and prevented the convulsions of the intestine coats, these are not so much agitated, neither are the capillary veins and arteries, which run over them, so much distended and compressed.

Moreover, the antispasmodic power of the *ippecacoanha* sufficiently also appears in other instances. Why? because the action  
of

of vomiting may be aptly deduced from it; for both oil and warm water will create a vomit; and that they possess this property is most certain. Opium itself likewise, which hath the greatest power of relaxing, has undoubtedly been found sometimes to affect the stomach in the same manner: yet this seldom happens, because that juice, while exhibited to the patient, according to the prescription of physicians, is for the most part, either dissolved in white wine, or is joined with spices, or such things as have an astringent tendency to strengthen the stomach. Besides, in every kind of loathing, we ourselves feel the fibres of our stomach rather become lax than contracted. For the muscular coat of the stomach has some fibres which fortify its upper orifice, in the manner of a *sphincter*, and other fibres

fibres which extend for the whole length toward the pylorus or it's lower orifice, and which press the food downwards into the intestines; but when either the former or latter are relaxed, the muscles of the abdomen do, by their pressure, drive back into the œsophagus or gullet, whatever is contained in the stomach: then the diaphragm or midriff ascends, while the air is let out from the thorax or chest; by this ascent the stomach is drawn upwards, and a vomiting ensues; so that it ought to create no surprise, if we ascribe a relaxing power to the *ipecacoanha*, which is a certain vomitory. This power appears further in this, that the *ipecacoanha* when joined with opium, is preferable to any other medicine, for relaxing the vessels of the skin in general; besides, it creates the most agreeable and plentiful

plentiful sweatings; and, what is not commonly known, that the *ipercacoanba* is the best and most effectual remedy for fits of the asthma; I mean when so great a contraction has seized upon the bronchia, and the membranous cellulae of the lungs, so as to hinder the ingress of the air; and when bleeding, blistering plaisters fetid gums, volatile salts, squills, musk, camphire, and even opium, have been found ineffectual; I have seen the contraction oftner removed by repeating the use of the *ipercacoanba*, and the freedom of breathing recovered, as that men were in a manner, rescued from immediate death thereby. But I may perhaps find another opportunity for illustrating this matter elsewhere.

F I N I S.